

App 2 - Tower Defense

1. Summary

This is a simple game where you have a pre made birds eye map of a terrain and a path on which the enemy will cross. As the game player your job is to place towers strategically along the path to kill the enemy that continually spawns from the start of the path, but you only have a certain amount of towers to place.

2. Positive Characteristics

The basics of the Tower Defense game works, that is the enemies, depicted as big black dots, come out and 'move' along the path that has been set, and as the user you are able to place a tower on a designated place. The towers also kill the enemy as required even though there isn't any graphics yet to show the bullets being shot. When you quit the app while in a game you are able to resume your current game as you left it.

3. Negative Characteristics

The graphics are very basic at the moment, just squares and dots. There is also only one level in the game so far and thus is very limited. There is no start up screen, and no saved game state. You can only put "Tower 1" so far on the map.

The graphics for the bullets being shot have not yet been implemented and so it is confusing to know whether or not the app is working. You have to continuously press tower 1 before being able to place tower 1 (if you are allowed to place more than 1 tower 1 or if you should be able to move tower 1 this is a problem, but if you are only meant to be able to place one tower 1 then this is fine).

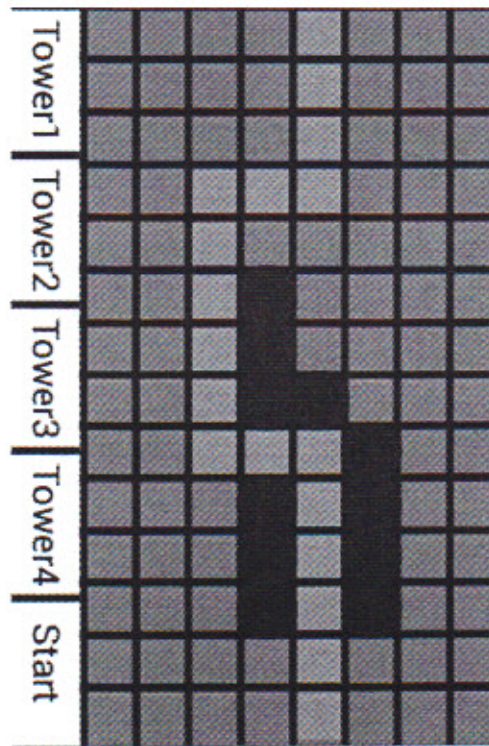
4. How well the app meets Android Guidelines

It lacks having an icon to begin with and it lacks the enchantment factor. The graphics are very basic and not very appealing at all at the moment, certainly not enchanting enough. In addition there isn't any touch feedback for any of the buttons. This causes a problem since you don't know which tower you are placing when you click on the board. The app is also not simple enough to be able to understand straight away specifically for the placing of the towers. It takes a bit of figuring out to know that you need to click on tower 1 first then the space. As for Patterns there is also no action bar or sort of menu button to be able to pause the game.

5. A list of Defects

- you cannot move a tower once it has been placed on the map
- you are allowed to put down as many towers as you want, and so this app can easily be won but just filling the screen with towers.

- the right hand side screen's grid has instead of squares, bit distracting/not



of the game green rectangles and so is just a consistent.

6. Rating out of 5

I will give this a rating of 1 out of 5 as well. It still has a long way to go before it is something that anyone would download and play.

7. Does it crash?

I have not been able to make Tower Defense Crash.

Tower Defense App

INTRODUCTION AND KEY FEATURES

The first application I reviewed was the Tower Defense App. The applications purpose is to entertain the user in the form of a game. To play the game the user puts down turrets to prevent the oncoming wave from reaching the other side of the map. The game currently features one level and one turret with one wave of enemies.

POSITIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The game is very simple and easy to pick up for anyone. The draw for many other tower defense applications is the ease of playability and simple and repetitive gameplay and this application contains both features. The application is also very easy to navigate for the user. The game did not give my phone a virus or do something very bad to my phone. The game also did not crash and did everything the readme told me it would do.

NEGATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

While the game is very simple it, it seems to be too simple. With lack of enemy graphics and tower graphics it is not very aesthetically pleasing. Also the game does not save state whenever the user puts the phone on lock and tries to come back. There is also no indication of whether a button is available or not, for example the start button is only functioning once right now for the only enemy wave of the game but the user has no way of telling that it cannot be pressed again. The towers also lack any form of description. There are currently buttons for four towers but user has no idea of what any of them do. The application also lacks an icon.

ANDROID DESIGN GUIDELINES

The Tower Defense app meets many of the design guidelines outlined by Android's design principles where it applies. The Tower Defense app keeps everything very brief. The menu is not cluttered by text neither is the actual game. However it fails to meet the specification of saving the user's work. The application works very fast adhering to the design principles Android has laid out.

DEFECTS

The only defect the Tower Defense app has is it fails to save the state of the game when the user locks his phone or goes out of session. In fact the app does not even return or re-open the app when the user returns from a locked phone. Whenever I locked my phone or my phone times out due to inactivity the application just closes and the app sends me back to my home screen.

RATING AND SUGGESTIONS

For the Tower Defense Application I will divide the rating up into multiple parts then average them. For gameplay I give the application a three out of five. It delivers the basic needs for a tower defense game however lacks many details. Aesthetically the application receives a one out of five. The menu is not pleasing to the eye and neither is the actual game, everything is just dots, bigger dots and some squares that come in multiple colors. For functionality the app receives a five out of five. It is very easy to use and is not confusing in any way. The menu is easy to navigate and when you're inside a level everything is very simple. Overall the application receives a three out of five rating. I suggest the first place to improve the application is the aesthetics. Add graphics, a more pleasing UI and something other than circles for enemies and towers. I also suggest adding descriptions for the towers.

TowerDefense Alpha Evaluation

This Tower Defense app is very bare as of now but has a lot of potential. Having played many Tower Defense games before, this game seems to be taking the formulaic approach of a grid, path, types of towers, and enemies. While this has method has been exhausted in the number of times it has been implemented, I enjoyed the familiarity of the game and instantly picked up how to play without any instructions. While the foundation is still being poured into this app, I see a lot of potential and creativity for implementation and I am looking forward to the beta.

As I've stated above, I think that the most positive part of this app is that it is following the formulaic Tower Defense path. Selecting and placing a tower was easy and the selection of towers seemed pretty diverse. That the animation for movement is well done and I'm surprised on how smooth it was when there were a lot of enemies on the screen. While graphically this game has not been developed, there has been a lot work put into this app and that can be shown that each enemy has a certain amount of life and the towers already have a radius and strength associated with them.

Most of the negative aspects of this app are going to be stuff that hasn't been included or polished yet. Right now the towers and enemies are just colored dots and you don't even know when you beat a level. The UI is also very default but I think that the developers wanted to build the app from ground up, so those parts will come as time is given to develop.

The visual portion of this app is still in development so the design does not adhere to the Android Design Principles. Right now the only navigation that the app has is one straight to the first level, and even once you complete the level, there is no victory message or option for the next level. There have not been any implementations of menus, levels, settings.

Since the game is very simple right now, I think that the biggest defect is not having a level terminate. Once all of the enemies are off of the screen, then the game just sits there. I think that is the biggest flaw right now and should have been added to the Alpha. If the level would have properly terminated then that would have been a proof of concept but this does not give me an indicator of what the actual game progression will be like. There were no crashes or weird bugs from what I encountered.

I'd give this app a 3/5 for right now at it's stage of development. This app does not have anything groundbreaking in it for a 5/5. I would have given a 4/5 if there was some termination or indicator of the end of the game. This app has the hardest part finished so everything should fall in place and I am eager to see what the developers have in mind for the enemies and towers.

Tower Defense App

1. A summary paragraph that identifies key features of the app.

The app overall very much resembles the idea of a game of Tower Defense. The UI is functional, and the game UI has the right look and feel for this kind of game. To start the game, which currently has one level right now, just pick level 1 and press the start button on the bottom right hand corner. Also, there is only 1 tower option to pick for now, but the other tower options are being implemented and will be present in the Beta version. When the game starts, simply continue clicking on the tower 1 option and place a tower on the grid to defeat the incoming enemies from the left hand side before they reach the end of their path on the right hand side. Since the game has only 1 level implemented right now, the game will be over when all the enemies are dead but no victory/defeat screen is shown to the user although the game is in fact over.

2. A list of positive characteristics (e.g. high-quality graphics, fun, indispensable tool)

- Nice tower defense grid layout
- Fun
- As far as the readme goes, app is functional for the alpha version specifications

3. A list of negative characteristics (e.g. force close, slow, confusing menu titles)

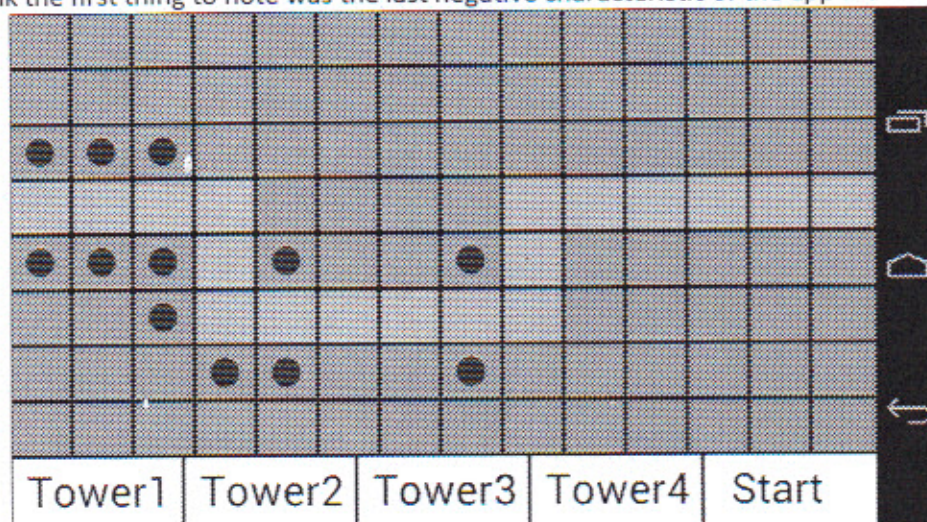
- Without the readme, would have been confusing to use
- A help me screen would be nice to show the user how to use the app effectively
- I think navigation was a little cumbersome since after level 1 was either won or lost, the app would sit there doing nothing

4. How well the app meets the Android Design guidelines.

I think the base design is there to help them to meet the guidelines in the Beta version. As stated in the readme, I think the group will meet the guidelines with the appropriate sounds, UI interactions (aka towers shooting at the enemies), etc. As of right now, the app meets some but not all of the design guidelines.

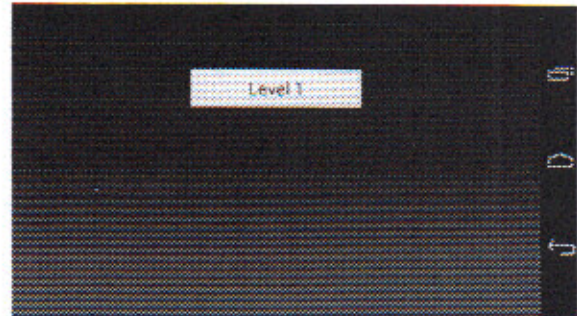
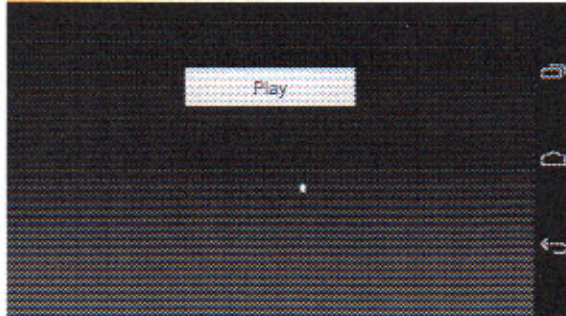
5. A list of Defects

I think the first thing to note was the last negative characteristic of the app that I mentioned.



The above picture shows that after the user has completed a level, nothing happens. In the above example, I had eliminated all the enemies and yet was not shown a victory/defeat screen. The game was just stuck there in that activity without an intent of some kind to begin a new activity. I'm sure the group who made the app understands that and will implement that in the Beta version as specified in their readme file.

Also, another major defect, which is not a defect in functionality, but just overall UI design in general, was how the app flowed from the home screen to the game screen.



When you start up the app, all the user sees is the Play button. There is no instance of playing from a saved game but rather always having to start from the beginning again once the app is closed. Also, there is no real sense of knowing what screen you are on. Each screen, both the home screen and the levels screen has only 1 button. It would make it easier for the user to understand where they are if there were some text or something else on the screen to help them use the app and know exactly what screen they are on and what screen they will be on once they hit a button. As stated before, I'm sure the group who made this app will continue to improve upon this for the Beta version.

I think that those were the two major defects that the app had. They were not defects in the sense that the app did not work or crash but rather in overall game play, experience and feel for the game. Once the group implements the specifications within the readme, I have no doubt that it will succeed in fulfilling in clearing away the defects and creating a game that not only mimics the game of Tower Defense but creates a unique spin-off of it to bring a fun game to the user.

6. A rating (1 to 5; 1 is poor, 5 is good)
My overall rating for this app is a 4.

7. If the app crashes while you are testing include details as to what device and OS you ran the app on.
The app did not crash while I was testing it.